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CONTENTS

LAVENDER

ISSUE 709 July 28-August 10, 2022

Pride in Pets

16 Downtown Dogs

18 Our Pets, Our Companions,
Our Friends

22 Purrniture

30 Pet Accessories For Your
Automobile



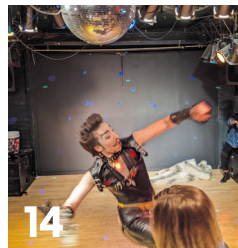
16

ON THE COVER

Downtown Dogs. Photo by Ashley Rick



Photo by Martha Waldemar



14: Photo courtesy of Black Hart, 24: Photo by Randy Stern, 30: Photo courtesy of Stellantis North America



OUR LAVENDER

8 From the Editor

9 A Word in Edgewise

OUR SCENE

10 Travel: Paris to Prague

14 Black Hart

OUR LIVES

24 Senior Living

27 Pride March Honoring
Ashley Rukes

28 Leather Life

34 MN National Guard

OUR RESOURCES

32 Community Connection

33 The Network

OUR HOMES

30 Our Rides



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Woof, Meow, Tweet, And Hello!

BY RANDY STERN

For those of us who do have kids, we have pets.

It is something we're known for – stereotypically or not. And, we do love our pets. Without them, our home lives would be incomplete!

I am certain there are studies that back up this. One such study showed that up to 75% if LGBTQ youth would own a pet as a source of support. The truth behind this figure is perhaps the key to our love of pets – they provide support.

In all of the stories you will be reading in this issue, the idea of “support” is evident. We often live our lives either by ourselves or with our spouse. Sometimes, there's an empty feeling inside the home. A pet fills that vacuum. They provide support when you need them. And, the feeling is mutual.

The key to pet life is making them comfortable – at home and on the road. We often are re-

minded to make sure we open up the windows of our homes and vehicles to make sure they get enough circulated air. A hot atmosphere is not conducive to pet life. If you have air conditioning, your pet will thank you. Make sure you keep it on for them when you're away.

These reminders are important to note. Because, we simply love our pets unconditionally. We will go as far as to rescue them and take better care of them than their previous owners. By better care, we'll even pamper them with better grooming, playthings and specific furniture, even car pet carriers! All in the name of keeping them active, comfortable, and loved!

These are things that we do as a community.

This issue features a Saint Paul business that offers the best of care for your dogs, when they really need them. We also feature another business that offers great playful furniture for your cat. This issue also spotlights some acces-

sories that make your pet comfortable, safe, and nourished while you are traveling on the road.

However, I want to publicly thank you for joining in on this issue. You and your pets are also featured on here in a section. We wanted to show a range of diversity, but no one came forward to talk about their snake or iguana. Maybe next year?

Also in this issue, we will have a compilation of photos from Twin Cities Pride weekend by our esteemed photographer Sophia Hantzes. We appreciate you being in front of her camera wherever she goes. That, among other columns you will find in this issue.

After reading this column, do yourselves a favor and take some time with your pet. Feel the support you both give each other. And, pass it on! We truly need it! ■



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The Cold Equations Still Wait To Embrace Us

BY E.B. BOATNER

Tom Godwin's "The Cold Equations" in the August 1954 *Astounding Magazine*, chilled me at thirteen, and still can, surfacing over the years to remind me there are actions whose consequences one simply can't alter.

The short story involves space pilot Barton, and Marilyn, a young stowaway, who had hidden aboard to hitch a ride join her brother, stationed on the destination frontier planet. But the craft carries only the exact amount of fuel needed for the pilot and his cargo of emergency medical supplies to reach the destination, and the law the law requires Barton to jettison all stowaways.

Most of us are used to being able to jigger, to work-around, to patch a computer problem or get a doctor's excuse for work absence. But now, on our own planetary level, there are facts that can't be jiggered, problems that can't be 'splained away. Vaclav Smil, a Czech-Canadian scientist and policy analyst whose interdisciplinary researches encompass issues of energy, food, population changes, historical and policy studies, including the broad environmental affairs of modern China. His latest book (of some forty) *How the World Really Works: The Science Behind How We*

Got Here and Where We're Going, looks at some of our own "cold equations," including energy, environmental and population change, food production, technical innovations, risk assessment, and public policy.

A lot to handle, but Smil writes clearly, succinctly, and sets the perceived problems one-by-one before the lay reader in a fashion that does not have an agenda but asks the reader to consider. For example: Is globalization truly inevitable? Is it reasonable, given the past two years, to allow 70% of the world's rubber gloves to be made in a single factory on the far side of the globe?

While we now have expanded food production, better housing, better public health access, safer vehicles, we still face risks, and the world is "replete with wrong perceptions and irrational risk appraisals." We are guided more by a dread of the unknown than by a comparative appraisal of actual outcomes.

And so, with the other topics, each of the seven chapter headings begin with "Understanding ..." and with "Risks" are included "Energy," "Food Production," "Our Material World," "Globalization," "Environment," "The Future." A valuable

"Appendix: Understanding Numbers," Smil suggests we read first.

Central to the volume is the subtitle of Chapter 3, "The Four Pillars of Modern Civilization," which, Smil posits, are "cement, steel, plastics, and ammonia." These four are needed in increasing quantities to make most of our ongoing material needs, and are not readily replaceable by other materials. We must also realize, he continues, that as we strive to cut the use of fossil carbon, that the mass production of the four pillars depends on combustion of fossil fuels which also supply feed-stocks for the synthesis of ammonia for the production of plastics. How quickly can we expect to go "green"?

Without understanding what components make up our daily lives, how can we possibly determine how—and whether—we can attain the fossil-less idyll we hold before us? Smil is asking us to consider the facts, and to use facts rather than emotions to plot out future course.

Young Marilyn, back in 1954, stepped into the airlock and shut the door. We still have time. ■



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Cruise ship on Rhine River, castle above it.

Drifting From Paris To Prague

BY CARLA WALDEMAR | PHOTOS BY MARTHA WALDEMAR

If my legs are shorter than when I boarded the plane two weeks ago, blame it on Paris. It was the first stop of a Viking cruise that continued through Luxembourg, following the Moselle River into the Rhine and Main as we floated our way to Prague, another of my Top Ten European haunts. Hey, after endless months of lockdown living thanks to covid, I'd have signed on to visit—oh, say, Anoka. Instead, we're strolling our way through Paris!

Everything the gushing guidebooks promise comes true. It's still home of starving artists, militant foodies and DIY philosophers scribbling away at their theses in sidewalk cafes (berets optional).

After the city tour which Viking provides at every stop (hello, Arc de Triomphe, bonjour, Eiffel Tower), my companion and I strolled past Notre Dame, still under repair from the tragic fire, on to the trendy boutiques of The Marais District, then the pricier ones lining Ste. Germaine, climaxing with a swing through boho Montmartre for dinner at Ernie's (think: Hemingway) of foie gras pate and onion soup.

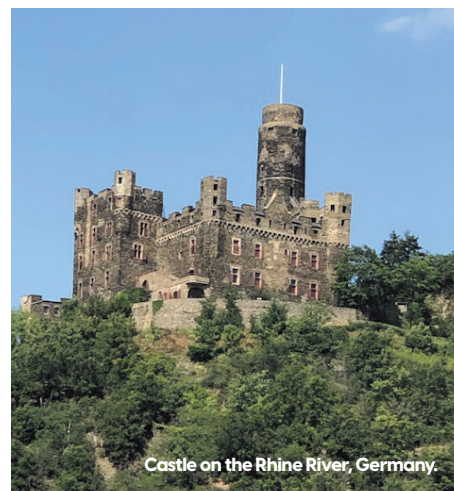
Up next: motoring to Reims, to explore its magnificent 15th-century cathedral ablaze with sunlight sparkling through jewel-toned stained glass. It's here where young Joan of Arc followed God's nudge and lobbied to become the coronation site of future kings of France.

After a reverential stop at the American cemetery in Luxembourg, resting place of WWII's fallen forces, we barrel on to Trier, in Germany, to board the charming riverboat Idi, where armadas of swans float by our cabin's balcony.

It's tempting to linger there in the comfort of our cozy cabin—our private heaven, where the bathroom blooms with luxe products and the floor is warmed to protect our tender toes. But no! Not with a spacious, window-walled lounge (home of nightly live music) beckoning—not to mention a sprawling sundeck lined with chaises to watch the fields and forests of Germany slide by. Wear off the sumptuous dinners to come on its jogging track or practice your golf swing, then cheer on the captain as he steers us through the first of many locks, like

concrete fish tanks.

Idi's meals are another reason never to return to reality. Start the day with an order of Eggs Bennie and cappuccino off the breakfast menu, and end it with dinners a Michelin inspector would covet: Norwegian salmon or Chateaubriand? Goat cheese souffle or Caesar



Castle on the Rhine River, Germany.

Continue on page 12



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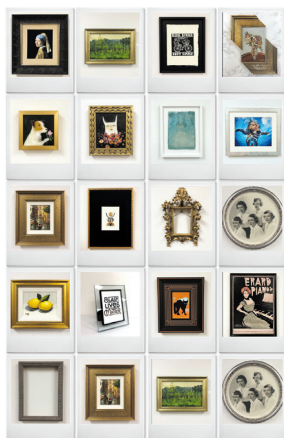
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Lunch at sidewalk café, Paris.

salad? Cheese tray or Black Forest torte? Just say yes. Endless pours of wine and beer are complimentary at mealtime, too.

Trier—Germany's oldest city, as we learn on our walking tour, was home to Celtic tribes before Emperor Augustus' troops marched in to create a "second Rome." Diocletian—the Donald of his day—erected bigger-is-beautiful buildings in his own honor, including the Porta Nigra, a formidable gate in the city's wall, as well as a vast amphitheater where gladiators wrestled with wild beasts, or each other.

When the Romans left, the church took over. The stone-lace Liebfraukirch of 1275 holds, they say, Jesus' bloody tunic and the nails that pierced his flesh. But the town's favorite son would have none of that. Karl Marx holed up and wrote his Communist Manifesto. He'd turn over in his grave if he knew that his former house has become the euro version of a dollar store.

Sailing on, we next docked at photo-ready Bernkastel, a tiny town dressed in medieval half-timbered houses strung along cobblestone lanes. Back on board, the Idi made its way to Cochem, where we sighted a hulking castle fortress awaiting our inspection. Clearing its heavy, fortified gates, we made our way through seven of its 50 rooms, admiring fireplaces paved in precious Delft tiles, a secret passage to milady's bedroom, and knightly armor clanking in the halls.

While the crew hauled anchor, we lunched on.... oh, maybe the Monte Cristo. Or the behemoth burger. Or pasta puttanesca. Maybe the schnitzel? Red wine or white? Hey, nobody said the choices would be easy.

Koblenz swam into view. It's here the Moselle flows into the mighty Rhine at a point called *Deutsches Eck*, the "German Corner," anchored by a statue of Kaiser Wilhelm perfecting his posture on a horse. Graceful riverside

promenades lead to the 12th-century Basilica of St. Kastor, whose lofty white ceiling showcases its Gothic stone ribs parading in pink. The same feminine theme decorates Our Lady's Church, aside a pretty square anchoring a network of shopping streets.

Casting off, we snagged chaises on the sun-deck as front-row seats in the parade of castles dotting the muscular Rhine in the hours to come. These are not pretty, Disneylike abodes for Cinderella—rather where Hamlet would brood if only he were German—each perched atop an overlook to better forestall attackers or extract bribes from passing ships—and, for many on Idi, the highlight of the voyage.

Next, it's off to Heidelberg, a town straight out of operetta-land with a cast of students populating the oldest university in Germany (1386). The main street is one long shopping arcade, overseen by the romantic ruins of a castle crumbling on the hilltop. Below it, the town hall of 1701 is the scene of couples entering to be married, then exiting amid pops of champagne corks. Gundel, the town's oldest bakery, sells the local specialty, the grapefruit-size sneeball (snowball) composed of pastry glued by chocolate. On a somber note, golden squares on the cobblestones commemorate homes from which Jewish families were ripped in 1938.

The next morning, an optional tour we'd ordered delivered us to Rothenburg, Germany's best-preserved medieval village—fulfilling every tourist's vision of a medieval fairyland. It's protected by four miles of encircling walls, atop which the hardy may patrol, to glimpse the town's red-tiled roofs and Gothic spires. It also boasts a macabre Museum of Crime and Torture, should you wish to view an iron maiden, shaming mask, chastity belt, and more. Instead, we gathered for lunch at Glock for a proto-German feast of potato soup, bratwurst and apple strudel, Beer, too, of course.

The day's tour continued to Würzburg to explore the uber-opulent Prince-Bishop's Residenz. Not one to hold back, the cleric ordered a ceiling mirage to be painted by Tiepolo, the bold-name Italian artist. For art of a less rarified nature, stroll through the Baroque garden in the rear.

Bamberg, our next expedition, flaunts 2,000 historic buildings occupying their original medieval layout. Thanks to flowing rivers, it dubs itself "Little Venice," complete with gondoliers. But Bamberg's burghers are equally proud of its beers (15 breweries) that go well beyond pils. The local brewski is called *rauch*, or "smoked," beer, which tastes as unusual as it sounds. Some equate it to liquid bacon, while others find it like "kissing an ashtray."

Climb (as usual) to the town's cathedral, where Henry II and his wife are buried and the

famed Bamberg Rider statue presides. (They allow horses in church?) The nearby cleric's Residenz could pass for Versailles. Below, murals decorate the mid-river town hall, serving as medieval billboards.

Nurnberg's up next, starting with the site of the Nazi Party rally grounds and the pulpit from which Hitler ranted. But the lively Old Town presents a happier picture. Market stalls fill the main square fronting the Church of Our Lady. It's topped by a wondrous glockenspiel featuring a parade of miniature figures honoring a tiny king when the clock strikes the hour. In the far corner of the square rises a mini-steeple called the Beautiful Fountain, a frilly carving that lives up to its name.

Our journey ends in Prague, a vivacious flirt of a city. And feisty! After the Nazis came 40 years under Russian rule, which collapsed with the brave Velvet Revolution. The yellow and blue flag of Ukraine flutters in solidarity all over town.

We began our exploration at Prague's cathedral-cum-castle complex ("the largest in Europe") on one side of the iconic Charles Bridge, festooned with vendors, tourists and heroic statues. Crossing into the Jewish ghetto, which, ironically, Hitler left intact to serve as "a museum of an extinct race," synagogues cluster around an tiny, emotionally moving cemetery, where tombstones rise vertically from multiple-use graves.

Crowds gather on the sprawling Town Square to gaze at its famed astronomical clock as the hour strikes. Then, down a cobble side street, we relish a farewell dinner for two (foie gras, roast duck, red wine) at the romantic Blue Duck as we toasted the trip of a lifetime and plotted of our next Viking voyage. Check out www.vikingrivercruises.com and start packing! ■



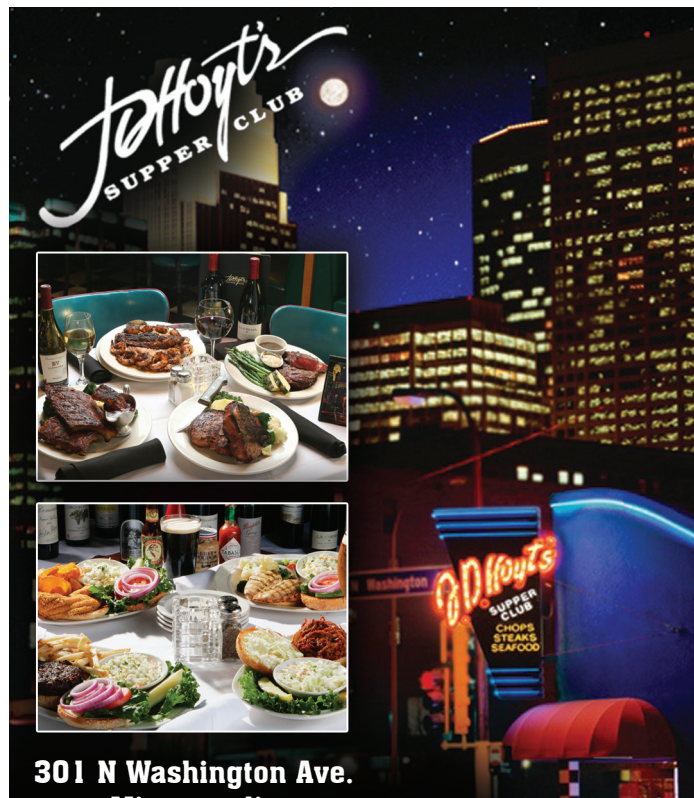
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Black Hart Creates New Legacy in Saint Paul

BY ISAAC JOHNSON | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE BLACK HART

On Saturday, July 30 at Allianz Field the Minnesota United FC will be playing their annual Pride game against Portland Timbers. For soccer fans and pride celebrators alike there is a neighborhood bar serving both niches.

The Black Hart in the Midway neighborhood of Saint Paul is “the new spiritual home for soccer in the Twin Cities” and it’s located a mere thousand feet from Allianz Field. With major ties to the MNUFC’s Supporter Groups, not only can you tune into matches of the Loons and MLS at Black Hart, you also don’t need to be shy about asking for any international game to be put on the screen.

As the hub for soccer fandom in the Twin Cities, The Black Hart hosts watch parties, fundraisers, and events to celebrate the sport and to honor the tradition of “proactively supporting progressive beliefs of inclusion and advocating for LGBTQ visibility in sports.” The Black Hart names its own patron saints consisting of drag queens and famous soccer players, like Megan Rapinoe, whose portraits go on the walls. They also host pre and post game parties, as well as a shuttle to TCO Stadium for Minnesota’s women’s soccer team, the Minnesota Aurora.

The Black Hart of Saint Paul is the revitalization of the former LGBTQ bar Town House. Wes Burdine took over as owner in August of 2018. He says, “come to a place that celebrates soccer, celebrates LGBTQ culture, and celebrates people in different ways. You can go to a soccer game and afterwards, come to a drag show. Where else in the world does that happen? That’s a way we want to foster this unique culture.”

On top of soccer, The Black Hart offers trivia nights, karaoke, darts, and billiards. There are also regular drag, burlesque, and circus-type shows with a more intimate setting featured on an integrated stage and dance floor. Burdine says, “People coming to the space are feeling vulnerable and open to expressing themselves. It’s a pretty infectious thing and it’s a really wonderful thing for me to sit back and just watch LGBTQ liberation. The ability to be oneself is an infectious thing that everyone can learn from.”

As many of us know, that liberation didn’t come without a price. For The Black Hart specifically, and the building it inhabits, its story and history are charged with drama and conflict. Starting as a cleaner and dryer, it was turned into the Tip Top Tap, a jazzy lounge and

supper club during the forties, and renamed the Town House in 1949. Many establishments in the area experienced hardship leading up to the sixties but Town House was revived when the current owner converted it into one of Saint Paul’s only LGBTQ bars in 1969. Regulars are reported to have been extremely shocked when they arrived to discover the unpublicized transition.

The seventies were highlighted with a feud between the female patrons and the male patrons, along with management, that included sit-ins, picketing, forceful removal, and a court case with female victors. Then long time employee Holly Monette took over ownership in the eighties, and the bar went on to survive a country western phase, and the impending doom of the construction of the light rail. The Town House avoided demolition but business was never the same. When Monette was ready to retire, the phone call from Burdine was, “the phone call she’d been waiting for.”

Burdine knew that taking one of the oldest LGBT bars in the city and turning it into a soccer bar, “was a nonstarter.” Through his conversations with Monette the concept to integrate the two into The Black Hart was formed.

Burdine reports, "One of my closest friends said, 'are you prepared for how gay your life it's about to get?' You can't half-ass get involved in creating an LGBT space and conversations like that helped me really understand there's a big difference between being an ally and trying to create and foster a space."

The central premise of The Black Hart is to have a safe place where everyone can feel free to be themselves. Alike are the sports fandom and the LGBTQ community in, "you get together, you commiserate, and you celebrate being around one another," says Burdine, "That's the affirming stuff that really gives me a lot of joy and all the warm fuzzy feelings, because we took it for granted for a bit, maybe, and then we get to see it come back and realize, that's why we did it."

With the stadium's construction complete and MNUFC's third season there underway, it seems it was a perfect combination. "I wanted to do this because I knew that we could create something special that was more than just about being sports fans," says Burdine, "but about harnessing the power and the energy of being sports fans into something bigger that advocates for inclusion of all types." ■







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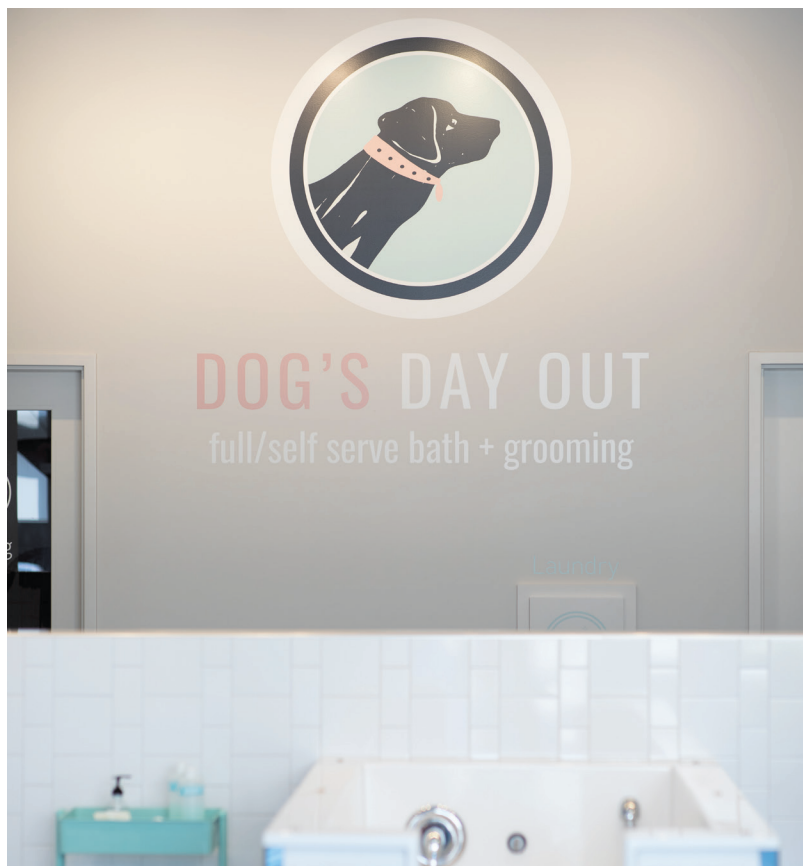
BY HOLLY PETERSON | PHOTOS BY ASHLEY RICK

In 2014 Ralph Bernstein realized that he was happiest in the moments spent at his dog's daycare. He had recently lost his wife to a stroke and when he found himself questioning the life that he built he decided to do something big about it. "I called Downtown Dogs' owner and asked if she'd be interested in selling the business," Bernstein explains, "To my surprise, she said yes...[and I] happily end[ed] my 30-year career as a banking executive."

The last eight years have been everything Bernstein expected them to be: a thrilling adventure, a huge commitment, and a chance to spend every day doing what he loves. Two years ago he expanded the venture by opening a dog spa (Dog's Day Out) next door to Downtown Dog. "Honestly, in the eight years that I've been doing this, I've yet to have a day that wasn't fun," says Bernstein. "I'm onsite 50-60 hours a week... and my wife, Abbe, – a woman who is genuinely as nuts about dogs as I am – helps with marketing, community outreach, and reception."

Downtown Dog is ruled by a "dog-first" philosophy. "We believe in meeting dogs where they are to give them the best possible experience. One way we do that is by understanding that dogs, like people, have unique personalities that need to be considered when they come to stay with us for daycare or boarding." Staff is responsive to dogs' moods and social preferences – making sure that quieter dogs get their space and





the more energetic ones get their wiggles out.

Downtown Dog has four playrooms and over 13,000 square feet of play space, which means plenty of space for every dog. Eight webcams cover the space, so nervous parents can always check in and see how their dogs are doing. “We are the longest established dog daycare and boarding facility in the Twin Cities. We’ve had, literally, tens of thousands of dogs come through our doors in that time, and we put that experience to work, every single day.”

Downtown Dog is also unique in that they offer a “drop-in” model for daycare. “[D]ogs are welcome to come for as little as one hour or stay the whole day,” explains Bernstein, “No reservations are required for daycare, after an initial evaluation visit. We do require reservations for overnight boarding to ensure that we have a spot for every dog.”

The love that both Ralph and Abbe have for dogs shines through in their business model: “Downtown Dogs is one of the few daycare and boarding facilities in town that happily takes all giant breeds like Great Danes, Mastiffs, Bernese Mountain Dogs, and all “bully” breeds like Pit Bulls, Staffordshire Terriers, Boxers, and French Bulldogs,” says Bernstein, “We always have, and always will, accept all breeds, ages, and sizes of dogs.”

Two years ago, in June of 2020, Bernstein opened Dog’s Day Out in response to Downtown Dog customers’ frequent requests for grooming services. “[C]onstruction was well underway before the shutdowns,” says Bernstein. Although the business was struggling due to the pandemic it made sense to follow through on what they had started. In the last two years, the business has bounced back to a certain extent. “Thankfully our business is back to about 75% of pre-Covid levels and improving,” says Bernstein.

Dog’s Day Out maintains the same “dog first” philosophy that defines its sister company. Applying that philosophy to grooming means addressing every dog’s needs. Sometimes those needs are as simple as a ramp into the tub for older dogs or boosters inside the tub for smaller

dogs. The company also offers private rooms for skittish dogs and buffers appointments “so we can give pups breaks during the cut as they need,” says Bernstein.

The spa also offers DIY grooming for people who want to groom their own dogs but do not have the space or the resources to do it at home. “[I]t’s turned out to be a great service for owners,” says Bernstein, “Some couples come in with their pup for a scrub as part of date night. And many people bring their kids to help with DIY baths. We have little stools and child-sized aprons so they can really participate in the process and have fun!”

Bernstein is committed to making a difference for people and pets alike. He has gained a reputation as an LGBT-friendly employer and offers higher than industry-standard wages, bonuses, and benefits in addition to pursuing healthy work lives for his team. Lindsay Bein, who is the General Manager at Downtown Dogs, explains Bernstein as a boss: “Ralph goes above and beyond for his team...He pushes us to find work/life balance, pays for life coaching, and helps us like we’re his family – like buying car seats for an employee’s baby.”

Similarly, Downtown Dogs is committed to supporting pet-friendly charities and non-profits, “Each year, we provide over 100 nights of free or discounted boarding to local rescue and foster organizations ...[we also] sponsor events and donate gift certificates and prizes to help non-profits further their mission,” says Bernstein.

Downtown Dog and Dogs Day Out are both local treasures. Whether you are boarding your dog for a weekend or just giving your dog a well-deserved grooming session, you can rest assured that they will get every ounce of care that they deserve – and then some. ■

Downtown Dogs

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www.dtdogs.com

Our Pets, Our Companions, Our Friends

BY LAVENDER MAGAZINE

There was a time when the only adoption we could do was for a pet. Nowadays, pets continue to be our companions, whether we are single or have a huge family around us. Our companions call to us when we're home – and when we're not. They also complete our lives.

We asked you – including our own staff – to tell us about your pets. Here are your responses...

And, here's to our happy companions!

KIKI LATHAM AND MEEKO

"He is the best dog ever!!!! I adopted him from a friend in March of 2021! He was afraid he wouldn't take to me, but he crawled into my lap not even being 5 minutes in my apartment



Photo provided by Kiki Latham

and we have been besties ever since! He's a mixed breed Chihuahua! I call him King Meeko because I'm a king too and I treat him like royalty! He has hoodies, sweaters, tank tops, and 3 kinds of food! lol! We walk everywhere together, take small trips, he gives me the best hugs, and when I'm sad he always curls up to me. His energy knows no bounds but I also love that we can chill and watch a movie. He is my family, my everything and I try to tell him I love him as often as possible because I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for him."

RICHARD SIMON AND MISS KITTY

"Miss Kitty showed up in my doorway around 2005. I was working on my flower garden. I was going in and out of my apartment

and I thought I tripped on something. When I looked, there was nothing there. Then the second time I tripped, there she was, a beautiful kitten with huge saucer eyes and giant ears.



Photo provided by Richard Simon

She looked up at me and meowed. So I gave her tuna and water. To my surprise, she came running every time she saw me coming home from work. So I kept her! She died on March 16, 2020, after many years of reoccurring urinary tract infections. People often say they rescued their cat: I like to think Miss Kitty rescued me. She arrived in my life when I was going thru some rough times; she gave me someone to care for, which in turn, saved me."

SUSAN AND DARCI MASON AND MAY

"We saw May on the Coco's Heart website. They're based out of Hudson, WI. Darcie and



Photo provided by Susan and Darcie Mason

I got to meet her at her foster mom's over the weekend, and it was a great first meeting! What we know is that May was born sometime in January and is a shepherd mix. Last night was the virtual home visit and it went well. She will come home sometime next week after she's fixed. Naturally, she is going to be spoiled like crazy!"

TOMMY AND KYLE DOUGHERTY-ROSENGREN, SASSY AND ROO

"Roo was a rescue dog that we adopted and fell in love with immediately. She is a loving fluff ball who loves hugs and is friendly to everyone she encounters. She exudes love and



Photo provided by Tommy and Kyle Dougherty-Rosengren

she has been the light in her daddy's eyes! She loves long walks on Victory Memorial Parkway

"Sassy was born on a farm in west central Minnesota. She was an unwanted puppy in a litter of other puppies because she had a cyst on her stomach. She was rescued and came to live with Tommy and Kyle in the cities. Being a country pup, she took a while to acclimate to the city life but she loves it here, and both her and Roo also love their visits to Tommy's parents' farm near Belgrade where they can run free with their seven fur cousins on the farm!

"Sassy and Roo are two of the most loving and caring fur babies ... they love their cuddles and their snuggles and they truly keep their Daddies busy."

Continue on page 20

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Photo provided by Shelley St. Aubin

SHELLEY ST. AUBIN AND AXL

"This is me and Axl, my quarantine cat. He was in a shelter and I was very lonely working from home during the early part of the pandemic. We saved each other. We love each other so much!"

SARAH ERBES AND CAPTAIN

"Captain & I just moved to Loring Park in May from Omaha, NE. Captain is a 7 1/2 (8 on 4th of July) year old schnauzer/Cairn terrier mix. I rescued Captain from an Omaha area shelter in April 2018. He is a former east Kan-



Photo provided by Sarah Erbes

sas farm boy who I believe came from a hoarding situation.

"Captain has always had the sweetest nature & has the purest soul I've ever encountered. He rarely meets someone he doesn't like. He is very in tune with the emotions of everyone he meets. If he can sense someone needs extra love, he's right there for a kiss, nuzzle, & cuddle. Several people have told me he'd make a great therapy dog.

"His favorite parts about moving to the Twin

Cities are all his new friends (human & canine) & having a big park just down the street."

HOLLY PETERSON AND MYSA

"My cat is named Mysa (which is a Swedish verb for "cozy"). Mysa is an adoptee, a Bengal, and the definition of an independent woman.



Photo provided by Holly Peterson

Over time I have convinced her to enjoy the little adventures I take her on – camping, hiking, and taking neighborhood strolls through St. Paul. We have also built up quite the repertoire of tricks: she can sit, stay, come, spin in a circle, shake my hand, and jump onto my shoulders. I keep hoping that I can also teach her to love cuddling, but aside from an absolute obsession with belly rubs, she is pretty stingy with affection. I kind of love it, though. I've had her for a year and a half and I still feel special every time she sits in my lap or sprawls across my leg."

BRETT BURGER AND WANDA

"This is Wanda who I adopted about a year and a half ago. She's my little magical black cat and is named after the Scarlet Witch, of course.



Photo provided by Brett Burger

This past spring she turned 3 and she's the absolute sweetest. She loves gazing out the window, cuddling while we watch movies, and playing with shoestrings."

LINDA RAINES, KYLA, GHILLIE, AND OBERON

"I have three dogs who are the absolute joys of my life! Kyla is a Basenji, an ancient breed of African hunting hound. I've owned Basenjis for over thirty years, and have shown them in AKC shows much of that time. Kyla is my heart-dog in every way, my constant companion, and my retired show dog at six and a half years old.



Photo provided by Linda Raines

"Ghillie is a six-year-old Scottish Deerhound and my current show dog. He's an AKC Grand Champion, and we're working on his Bronze Grand Championship. These dogs were used for centuries in Scotland for chasing down and hunting the huge red stags over the Scottish moors, and are the sweetest and gentlest of giants. He's our second Deerhound and will not be our last!

"Oberon is a four-year-old Podenco Ibicenco or Ibizan Hound. He is a rescue dog from Spain, and I went over to Madrid, Spain to bring him back along with five other rescued Podencos and Galgos (Spanish greyhounds) for a rescue group called The Sighthound Underground. These rabbit hunting breeds are horribly abused in the rural areas of Spain, so I have supported a couple of rescues for a number of years before we fell in love with Obie's photo on Podenco Friends' site and applied to adopt him. He has been the sweetest, funniest, most clownish, loving and challenging dog that I've ever owned, but I wouldn't change him for the world. He makes me laugh every single day." ■



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Purrniture: Furniture For Your Feline

BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

When your cat rules the roost, you have to find ways to not only make them comfortable and let them be themselves. However, you have to protect what you have at your home. The scratches on your couch, the hair on the upholstery...you get the idea.

For years, the solution to keeping your cat happy at home is to give them their own furniture. They range from a simple item that they can play and relax in, something of its own ecosystem that stretches their physical fitness and provides a territory towering over your living space.

Since 1991, Purrniture in Saint Paul established themselves as a purveyor of solid, sturdy, and well thought out, designed, and built furniture for your felines.

The idea came from Darryl Michaelson's experience with his own kittens. "In June of 1990," explained Michaelson, "I had two kittens (Rufus and Dimitrious) and was looking at cat furniture for them. I realized the market had really cheaply made furniture so thought I would make my own."

Then, Michaelson got to work. "My approach though was scrounging up a pile of wood and trying to think like a cat in creating something," explained Michaelson. "The process took the entire weekend, but my

cats loved it, and, to me, it felt like I had made it for free."

Thirty-two years later, Michaelson turned this creative weekend project out of repurposed wood and carpet remnants into a business. "When I made it a business," Michaelson explained, "I saw that not all people want a big jungle gym. It was then I made a 'line' of Purrniture. From the Basic Pedestal to the Castle Royale with 20 designs in between. Our line of cat furniture should be able to fulfill any of your cat family needs."

During the first few years of Purrniture, Michaelson was working with his customers to create unique designs. By 1994, Purrniture's sales brochures began identifying certain pieces with specific names. Michaelson also pointed out that the choice of carpet finishes came from repurposing remnants and "end of rolls" pieces. "The carpet is new," Michaelson further explains, "and in today's latest fashions but are too small to cover a room. The industry would have to pay to recycle their remnants."

How are these pieces of furniture made? Michaelson explains that making a piece of Purrniture is "a three step process. First is to build the frame. The frame is only partially put together to allow upholstering. Second is cutting out the carpet pieces. Purrniture's signature design

is the Orbitor. It takes a 12 x 5 piece of carpet to upholster it. That piece of carpet is cut into 17 specifically cut pieces. Then it is upholstered with approximately 1000 staples to bring it into a one piece of carpet appearance again."

While you can go purchase these pieces of Purrniture directly from their Saint Paul store on University Avenue, you can also get them from Chuck & Don's stores. "Chuck and Don's has been a great business to work with," said Michaelson. "They too started out family owned. C&D buys at a volume discount so they can profit as well but the prices are the same between us."

However, there are some challenges for Purrniture. "Distribution is the challenge for this type of product," explained Michaelson, "which is why I knew from the beginning to open a location of my own."

When you do buy direct from Purrniture there are some extra perks that you can enjoy. "I started a Satisfaction Guarantee," said Michaelson. "It asks that you let 4 weeks pass before it can be returned. Some cats just need more time. Placement is also important – the main room of the house." The results were beyond phenomenal. As Michaelson pointed out: "In 32 years of business less than 20 pieces have been returned."

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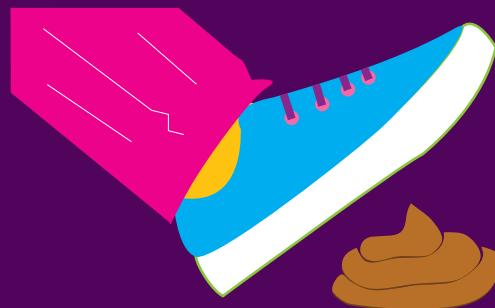
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Photo by Randy Stern

Lunch Is In The House

BY MAE WHITNEY

For over 50 years Friends & Co has served older adults in Minnesota by combating one of the most pressing issues seniors face, isolation. Their mission works towards this goal by providing companionship, connection, and community.

Human beings are social creatures who depend on the love, cooperation, and care an enmeshed community provides, no matter the age. When it came time to quarantine folks witnessed firsthand the isolation most commonly experienced among older adults later on in life. We may not always consider how precious the time we have with one another is or how vital our health is to enjoying that time. I can say I have been guilty of taking my good health and the six-ish decades I have left, knock on wood, for granted.

Social isolation is a growing concern for older adults, especially in the LGBTQ community, as shown by the 2022 MN LGBTQ Aging Needs Report; Thanks to this recent study we now have the updated data, stories, and the experiences of aging LGBTQ Minnesotans and how their needs have changed over the last decade. Now we look towards those who are already taking action.

Friends & Co. has stepped in with solutions

to combat isolation through companionship via the telephone, one-on-one in person visits, and lively shared lunches twice a month accompanied by cheerful presenters and volunteers.

“Let’s Do Lunch” – The bi-monthly get-together welcomes older LGBTQ community members for lunch “on the house.” Attendees enjoy educational and informative programming on the local resources available to them in the metro. Anywhere between thirty and

fifty members are usually in attendance. Its popularity has made the event one of the cornerstones of the work being done at Friends & Co.

I asked Dennis Glock, Marketing Director for F&C, what he thinks is so impactful about the popular event “Well, it gives them a sense of reassurance. They feel that there are still human beings out here, and some of these human beings really do care about me as an individual.



Photo provided by Friends & Co.



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And they're here, and they're taking their time, and they're sharing this, and I'm feeling it and connecting with it."

Aging doesn't discriminate and as the need for community resources around our LGBTQ elders grows, so does the need for volunteers and support. Anyone interested in volunteering or donating to the cause can check out their website, www.friendsco.org.

Upcoming dates for "Let's Do Lunch" are August 9th and August 26th 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sign up for events through their website and keep up to date through the facebook group. All information can be found at www.friendsco.org.

Maybe there is a "free lunch," after all. ■





Photo by Sophia Hantzes

TWIN CITIES PRIDE MARCH HONORING ASHLEY RUKES MINNEAPOLIS MN

JUNE 26, 2022



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



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The sign decorating City Square Park's historic gazebo during the Chaska Pride Picnic.



A Pride Picnic in Chaska

BY STEVE LENIUS | PHOTOS BY STEVE LENIUS

Pride celebrations are increasingly happening in smaller cities and towns. They no longer are held only in big cities and major metropolitan areas. Lately, *Lavender Magazine* has done a good job of covering these smaller pride celebrations. And I was pleasantly amazed recently when I experienced a Pride Picnic in Chaska, Minnesota—my former hometown. The fact that I just happened upon this Pride Picnic made it an even sweeter surprise.

Chaska's Pride Picnic, which promised a chance to "Celebrate Pride Month with food, fun and friends!", was held in City Square Park on June 12, 2022. It was a gorgeous Sunday afternoon—bright sunshine and a pleasant breeze filtered through the canopy of the park's majestic trees. The picnic was put together by the Chaska Parks and Recreation department, with support from the Chaska Human Rights Commission and Chaska High School Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club. A spokesperson for Chaska Parks and Recreation told me that the Pride Picnic is in line with the department's goal of providing inclusive events at low or no cost. (This was actually Chaska's second Pride Picnic; the first was in 2021.)

I was completely unaware that the Pride Picnic was going on. I had traveled to Chaska for an outdoor visit with my father, who is a resident at Auburn Manor, a senior living facility in Chaska. Auburn Manor is just two blocks away from Chaska Moravian Church, which was the last congregation my father served as pastor. City Square Park, where the Pride Picnic was held, is directly across the street from Chaska Moravian Church.

After I finished my visit with my father, I was driving past the church on my way home when I noticed rainbow garlands at the edge of the park. Driving a little further, I saw a sign that said, "Welcome to PRIDE PICNIC."

A Pride Picnic? In Chaska? Wow, I thought, I should stop and check

this out. So, I did. What I saw made for a very unexpected and pleasant surprise.

The air at the picnic was festive. There were several community art projects, including the opportunity to make a bracelet or necklace with rainbow beads. A long table held a long sheet of white paper on which people were drawing or writing with brightly colored markers. People at another table were coloring pictures of butterflies. Other parts of the park were devoted to lawn games, face painting, henna tattoos, a tie-dye station, and even two live rainbow-festooned Pride Llamas. A rainbow banner on the historic gazebo in the center of the park proclaimed, "LOVE is LOVE," while a DJ in the gazebo played pride-celebration dance music and people decorated the brick plaza around the gazebo using colorful sidewalk chalk.

One of the most popular parts of the picnic was the ice cream social sponsored by Chaska Parks & Recreation. Of the three flavors of ice cream on offer, I chose the "Superman" ice cream (blue, red and yellow, the colors of Superman's outfit) and decorated it with rainbow sprinkles. Also available was a food truck selling Greek and Egyptian fare.

The afternoon had one solemn moment: At one point the music was interrupted by a student member of the Chaska High School Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club, who reminded attendees that six years ago that very day, on June 12, 2016, a mass shooting happened at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla. The student called for a 49-second period of silence in memory of the 49 people who were killed in that mass shooting.

Wandering around the park, around which I had wandered so often in past years, I saw a diverse mix of people enjoying the picnic. I saw young people in rainbow, bisexual, or transgender capes; I saw single- or double-parent families with children; and I saw a few people my own age. I even ran into some colleagues from *Lavender Magazine*: Ellen Krug, the "Skirting the Issues" columnist, and Randy Stern, the magazine's



From left: *Lavender Magazine* colleagues Ellen Krug, Randy Stern, and your humble columnist at the Chaska Pride Picnic.

Managing Editor.

You may have guessed by now that having a Pride Picnic in Chaska—hosted by the city, no less—was a big deal for me. I spent most of my teenage years in Chaska. I even, for a brief period, lived in the Chaska Moravian Church parsonage, which was next to the church and directly across the street from the park where the Pride Picnic was held.

I graduated from Chaska High School after having been a student in Chaska schools starting in the middle of sixth grade. In those years Chaska High School did not yet have a Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club. That did not mean, however, that there were no gay students, as I found out many years later. Offhand I can think of at least eight people I went to school with whom I later discovered to be gay, lesbian, or queer. But at that time none of us talked about it. Some of us may not even have been aware of it.

During my years in Chaska I was not out as gay, even to myself. (Of course, I suppose there were other people who could see my secret, even if I couldn't.) I never dated during high school, and on some level I knew I was attracted to men. But I thought my attraction to men was—yes!—"a phase." I simply had not yet met "the right girl." I would graduate from high school, go to college, find "the right girl," get married and settle down, raise a family, and so on.

Of course, that's not what happened.

Even so, a Pride celebration in Chaska—in the park across the street from where I used to live—well, that was never even on my mental radar screen. So to see a Pride celebration in Chaska, all these years later, was kind of amazing. I didn't know I was waiting for this, but once I arrived at the picnic, I was very glad to see it.

Moral of this story: We are everywhere. Even in Chaska. ■



MA AND ME: A MEMOIR

Putsata Reang?
Farrar Straus and Giroux
\$28

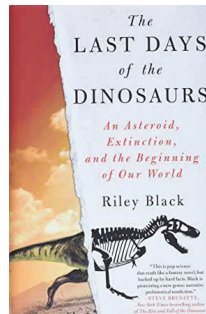
Infant Putsata Reang was carried by her mother (Ma) through war-riven Cambodia, and twenty-three harrowing days aboard ship, Ma refusing to throw her (presumed) dead infant overboard until finally, American medical staff in the Philippines. Debt was incurred on both sides, young Putasa trying to please the Ma who had saved her life, Ma intent on creating the perfect Khmer daughter—dress, deportment, a Khmer husband. Impossible for either to achieve in America, socially, culturally, sexually; Putsata did not seek a husband of any sort. Reang unravels the painful coils of generational trauma and the impossible demands of cultural and family duty that almost—but not quite—crush the bedrock of love. An exhausting yet rewarding read; what must it have been like to live?



QUEER SPACES: AN ATLAS OF LGBTQIA+ PLACES AND STORIES

Ed. Adam Nathaniel Furman & Joshua Mardell
RIBA Publishing
\$54.95

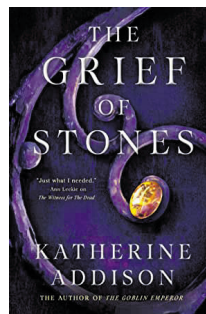
Furman and Mardell present 92 glimpses into gay life and interaction in "Domestic," "Communal" and "Public" sections. Each individually-authored essay is relatively short, but the enticing mix of photographs, floor plans, art, historical data or current interviews, open avenues to further exploration and emphasize that LGBTQIA+ individuals have been among us—and will continue to be—for a long, long time. Dragon Men in Tokyo, Homomonument in Amsterdam, Category is Books, Glasgow, London's Cave of Harmony of the 1910s-1920s, Plas Newydd, Llangollen, Wales, 18th Century cottage of the be-suited Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, Light Coffin—Dracula's Den, Chiba, Japan, a unique, windowless abode designed by Osamu Ishiyama for two male clients are just a few entries. A volume to keep close and savor.



LAST DAYS OF THE DINOSAURS: AN ASTEROID, EXTINCTION, AND THE BEGINNING OF OUR WORLD

Riley Black
St. Martin's Press
\$28.9

Researched yet speculative, a charming travel through long-time (66-million years) by the author of *Skeleton Keys* and *My Beloved Brontosaurus*. The day a giant asteroid hit Yucatán's Chicxulub Peninsula may have been Earth's worst day ever, but the tremendous loss of life opened the evolutionary door for Homo Sapiens. Starting earlier that day, Riley, from Hell Creek, Montana, enters "Before Impact" and on to "Impact" and its immediate lethal effects, then outward; "The First Day," "The First Month," "One Year After Impact," "One Hundred Years..." "One Hundred Thousand ...," "One Million Years After Impact." Who survived, and why is explored through illustrated creatures. We'll never know the whole story, but can now picture who burrowed, who breathed shallowest, ate less, dozed longer, biding their time.



THE GRIEF OF STONES

Katherine Addison
TOR
\$25.99

Part of Addison's Goblin Emperor world, *The Grief of Stones* is second in her *Cemeteries of Amalo* tales featuring *The Witness for the Dead* protagonist, Thara Celehar. Sent to serve as a Witness for the Dead, eleven detective Celehar is taken aback to discover that he's been sent an apprentice, the widow Velhio Thomasaran, and commanded to instruct her. The plot complicates when the Marquess Ulzhavel, suspecting his wife's murder, requests Celehar inquire into her death. Further complications arise when Celehar and Velhio discover a connection between the wife and a murdered student at a founding school, the situation now becomes rife with scandal. The heart of Addison's stories lie in the reality and believability of her characters; if you haven't read *Witness* yet, do. ■



Pet Accessories For Your Automobile

BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS COURTESY OF STELLANTIS NORTH AMERICA

Part of our pet-loving experience is to take one for a road trip. Or, to the veterinarian when they are not feeling well.

No matter the circumstances, we have to find ways to transport them safely and comfortably.

You can go to the local pet store to get solutions to make sure your pet is comfortable, nourished, and safe when you are driving them across town or over state lines. You might even connect with pet friendly automotive manufacturers who can provide custom-designed and built solutions that fit your vehicle perfectly.

One of those pet friendly automakers just happen to be Stellantis – the producers of Jeep, Ram, Dodge, Fiat, Chrysler, and Alfa Romeo – among other brands. Their MOPAR division has been creating custom solutions for years to make our lives better. That also

include accessories for your Stellantis vehicle made specifically for your pet.

It starts with solutions made for one of our long-running favorite brands – Jeep. MOPAR offers pet kennels and mats to fit your Wrangler and other Jeep vehicle. The kennels themselves are designed to fit in the cargo hold of the two-door or four-door Wrangler. It is breathable to allow for airflow, which helps keep your pets comfortable back there.

In fact, the Jeep Wrangler was named one of the 10 Best Cars for Dog Lovers by *Auto-trader*. Not just for availability of pet accessories, but how a Wrangler exudes the feeling of ultimate freedom for you and your pets.

One of the company's signature products is the minivan. The Chrysler Pacifica and Dodge Grand Caravan gave us innovations, such as Stow 'n Go seating for the second and third row. By folding down either or both

rows of seats, you provide more roaming space for your pet. Also, Stow N' Go seating can be configured quickly without removing any of the seats from the vehicle entirely.

MOPAR takes advantage of this feature by providing a pet kennel that fits many sizes of dogs and cats. The kennel also folds down to be stowed out of the way when not in use. It is also spacious enough for water and food bowls, toys, and other items your pet needs to be comfortable.

There are a few additional features will help Pacifica owners with peace of mind when transporting their pets. For one, the FamCAM can give you a glimpse of the area behind the front seats to check on your precious cargo. A rear seat reminder sends an audible warning if the sliding rear doors are open before you take off with your pet. Also, you can clean up after your pet using the

Continue on page 34

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NAMI Minnesota

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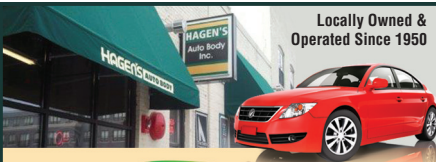
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While MOPAR provides high quality accessories for their vehicles, Subaru owners also are given a great choice on pet accessories for their lineup. These accessories include cargo area pads for specific Subaru models, padded seat protectors, pet carriers, harnesses, ramps, bowls, and so forth. Not only does Subaru Loves Pets, we also love Subarus. Also, Volkswagen's Driver's Gear catalog has a few pet accessories to go along with your Volkswagen lifestyle. Plus, you can also get some pet accessories from Ford, too.

To order these accessories, you can either go online to their respective brand/maker websites each for particular items and order accordingly. You do have the choice to have them shipped directly to you or pick them at your nearest dealer's parts department. Otherwise, a trip to the pet store works just as well.

The major takeaway from this is simple: When you traveling with your pet in your automobile, please make sure they are safe, comfortable, nourished, and happy. That also includes keeping the windows open to ensure proper ventilation for your pet. All of this will help you find the best solution when traveling with your pet by automobile. ■

Lavender President & CEO Receives High Honor From Minnesota National Guard



Lavender Magazine's President & CEO Stephen Rocheford was just given the highest civilian honor by the Minnesota National Guard, the Superior Civilian Service Medal. It is the civilian equivalent award to the military "Legion of Merit." Major General Shawn Manke presented it to Rocheford in front of his staff at a lunch on Thursday, July 7, 2022. ■





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